



## COVID-19 Health Plan

This guidance document, which is aligned with the [CDC guidance for schools](#), serves as a recommendation for Pittsylvania County Schools to help mitigate the overall risks associated with COVID-19. Key stakeholders who participated in the development of this plan include the [Division and School-Based COVID-19 teams](#), as well as select building-level administration, teachers, ancillary staff and parents from across the division. Strategies, protocols and procedures outlined in this guidance document reference [CDC Guidance](#) and [Virginia Phase Guidance- for Schools](#).

Through all phases of reopening, Pittsylvania County Schools will follow guidance provided by the Governor's Office, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Pittsylvania County Health Department.

### General Planning Considerations

The plan was designed to complement other community mitigation strategies, protect high risk populations, minimize disruption to teaching and learning, and protect students and staff. The more people a student or staff member interacts with, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. The risk of COVID-19 spread increases in school settings as follows:

- *Lowest Risk:* Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.
- *More Risk:* Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
- *Highest Risk:* Full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.

This document is divided into two main sections. Section I: *Reducing the Spread of COVID-19*. The section focuses on promoting behaviors and strategies to mitigate the risk of acquiring COVID-19 in the school environment. Areas targeted include the following: preventative health

and safety measures; maintaining healthy environments and operations; and protections and provisions for more vulnerable individuals. Section II: *Responding to Confirmed or Suspected Cases of COVID-19* focuses on addressing students and staff who may be ill with COVID-19 and procedures in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19.

## **SECTION I: Reducing Spread of COVID-19**

### **Promoting Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of COVID-19**

Pittsylvania County Schools (PCS) will promote the following preventative health and safety practices as recommended by the CDC to reduce the spread of COVID-19 :

- **Education and Training**
  - Schools will conduct training for staff and orientation for students and families specific to new COVID-19 mitigation strategies outlined in this guidance document which include:
    - Encouraging physical distancing,
    - Use of cloth face coverings,
    - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and
    - Staying home when sick.
  - Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) to promote [everyday protective measures](#) and describe how to [stop the spread of germs](#).
  - School and class announcements will be utilized to educate students, staff, and families on reducing the spread of COVID-19.
  - Education and Training of PCS staff, students, and parents is outlined in [Division COVID-19 Training Plan](#).
    - Training resources and supplemental materials are available to all schools through a shared *Reopening Resources for Schools* google folder.
    - Additional training resources created by the Virginia Department of Education in collaboration with George Mason University and the Virginia Department of Health will be added once available.
- **Physical Distancing**
  - Schools will aim for 6 feet of physical distance *to the greatest extent possible*; however, staff and students are expected to wear a facial covering in settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- Layouts of classrooms and communal areas will be modified to ensure social distancing of at least 6 feet can be maintained.
- Spacing and seating on school buses will be adjusted. Students will sit one to a seat (children who live in the same household may share a seat) and seating will be staggered to allow for physical distancing.
- Food/Dining services will be altered to optimize physical distancing.
- Strict physical distancing practices will be imposed at gatherings, school-related sports and other recreational activities.
  - The [Health Plan for VHSL Conditioning Activities](#), developed in accordance with the [Virginia High School League](#), provides more specific guidance for school-related sports.
- **Cloth Face Coverings**
  - Face coverings will be worn by staff when physical distancing of at least 6 feet cannot be maintained with rare and specific exceptions.
    - For certain populations, the use of cloth face coverings by teachers may impede the education process. Face Shields that cover the front and sides of the face and go below the chin may be used by select teachers and/or other specialized staff - *in lieu of a cloth facial covering* - when working with students during **exceptional** situations:
      - Students who are deaf or hard of hearing,
      - Students receiving speech/language services,
      - Young students in early education programs,
      - Students considered English-language learners,
      - Students participating in specialized evaluation sessions.
  - Students are expected to wear face coverings as medically and developmentally appropriate in settings where physical distancing of at least 6 feet cannot be maintained (e.g. restroom, two-way hallway traffic, school bus).
- **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**
  - Schools will teach and reinforce [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be used.
  - Staff and students will be encouraged to [cover coughs and sneezes](#) with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- **Shared Objects**

- Shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games, shop tools, science lab equipment) will be limited when possible, or cleaned between use.
- Student belongings will be separated from others', in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Sharing of high touch materials will be minimized to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment). Supplies and equipment will be used by one group of children at a time and cleaned and disinfected between use.
- Computers must be disinfected in accordance with IT protocols. [How to Clean a Keyboard](#)

### **Maintaining Healthy Environments and Operations**

Pittsylvania County Schools will promote the following preventative health and safety practices as recommended by the CDC to maintain healthy environments and operations:

- **Health Services**

- Health Services staff will be provided appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) which includes medical grade face masks, face shields, gloves and gowns when appropriate.
- Typical (non-COVID-19) health services will be maintained with [revised processes and procedures](#).

- **Daily Health Screenings**

- Staff, students, and visitors will be required to complete a health screening prior to entering the school building, as outlined in this [protocol](#) and [flowchart](#).
- All health screenings will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.
- Staff will conduct a [daily health screening](#) at home prior to entering their place of work.
- Parents will conduct a [daily health screening](#) on all PCS students prior to sending students to school.
  - In addition, student temperatures will be taken daily by a trained staff member prior to boarding the bus for or entering the building.
- Essential visitors who will be in school buildings for 15 minutes or longer will also be required to complete the daily health screening as outlined in the [Division Visitor Protocol](#).

- **Scheduling and/or Grouping**
  - Student and staff groupings will remain static to the extent possible; the same group of children will stay with the same staff, when appropriate.
  - The mixing of groups will be limited.
  - Flexible schedules will be utilized to help establish policies and practices for physical distancing between employees and others.
  
- **Gatherings, Visitors, and Field Trips**
  - Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations will not be permissible at this time. This will be revised as the division progresses through phases of reopening.
    - [Division Visitor Protocol](#)
  - Group events, gatherings, or meetings, will be held virtually when possible. Physical distancing of at least 6 feet between people will be imposed if events are held.
  - Virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights, will be explored as appropriate.
  - Large gathering limits will be determined by the Executive Order in effect at the time and physical distancing will be imposed.
  
- **Cleaning and Disinfection**
  - [Cleaning and disinfecting](#) of frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles) within the school and on school buses will be conducted at least daily, or between use, as much as possible.
  - Each building will develop a schedule of increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
  - Cleaning and disinfecting products will be safely used and stored.
  
- **Supplies that Promote Healthy Hygiene**
  - Adequate supply of soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, disinfectant, and other cleaning supplies will be maintained.
  - Cloth face coverings will be provided to employees.
  - Face shields will be provided to select teachers and/or other specialized staff when working with students during exceptional situations.
  - One cloth face covering will be provided to students.

- In the event that a student becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day and does not have a cloth face covering, one will be provided.
- **Ventilation**
  - PCS will ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.
  - PCS will ensure ventilation is adequate when using cleaning and disinfection products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
- **Water Systems**
  - PCS will ensure that all water systems and features are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
  - Drinking fountains will be closed. Refillable water stations will be used in lieu of drinking fountains.

### **Protecting Vulnerable Individuals**

Pittsylvania County Schools will promote the following preventative health and safety practices as recommended by the CDC to help protect our more vulnerable students and staff:

- **Provisions for Students & Staff at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19**
  - Students at [higher risk of severe illness](#) will be offered additional options for participation in educational opportunities that limit their exposure risk (e.g., remote learning opportunities).
  - All staff will be trained on all safety protocols to ensure continuity of operations.
  - Staff at higher risk for severe illness will be supported by reasonable accommodations that are in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (amended) and CDC guidelines.
  - Staff will have access to appropriate leave entitlements in accordance with their employment benefit group. In addition, the school division will be in compliance with the provision of the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (FFCRA) which apply from April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020.
  - Protocols that are in accordance with recommendations from the CDC and the VDH will be implemented for the return of employees and students to work and class, respectively, following a COVID-19 illness. This will be a collaborative effort with School Health Services, Human Resources, and Instruction.

- **Support Coping and Resilience**

Pittsylvania County Schools will work to address the varying levels of social-emotional wellness concerns to the best of its ability utilizing the current resources available. A multi-tiered approach to social-emotional wellness supports will be utilized to ensure equitable opportunities for all students and staff. Those strategies are outlined fully in the division's [Social-Emotional Wellness Plan](#), and [SEL resources](#) from the VDOE.

## SECTION II:

### PCS Response to COVID-19 Confirmed or Suspected Case(s)

It is the responsibility of the staff member or parent (on behalf of the student) to report COVID-19 diagnosis, pending diagnosis, and/or exposure to the school principal. In all cases, School Health Services and Human Resources should be contacted. A specific protocol outlines the communication process for potential COVID-19 cases in [staff](#) or [students](#). Pittsylvania County Schools will follow further guidance provided by the [Pittsylvania County Health Department](#).

#### General Considerations

- Staff and/or students should notify the designated [school-based COVID-19 point of contact](#) and stay home and if they (or a family member), experience any of the following:
  - become ill with COVID-19 [symptoms](#);
  - test positive for COVID-19;
  - have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 symptoms;
  - Have been exposed to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.
- Each school will have a designated area where individuals who present with COVID-19 symptoms can be separated from others. Guidelines for the *Health Annex* can be found [here](#).
- School nurses should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See: [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#).
- Ill staff should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on the severity of symptoms.
- Ill students will be transported home or to a healthcare facility by their parent/guardian or designated adult with parent permission.
- Areas used by sick individuals will be cleaned and disinfected.
  - Areas used by a sick person will be closed off and not used until after cleaning and disinfecting.

- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Cleaning and disinfection products will be used correctly and stored safely securely away from children.

### **Responding to Potential COVID-19 Exposure**

The following scenarios may be used as guidance when responding to potential COVID-19 exposure with staff and students. These guidelines will be updated as new information and guidance is received from appropriate agencies.

#### **Scenario A: Staff or students diagnosed with COVID-19**

- Whether symptomatic or not, staff or students diagnosed with COVID-19 must self-isolate in accordance with CDC and [VDH guidelines](#).
- Appropriate contact tracing must take place including exposure to any individuals based on the criteria of being “within six feet of the individual and having a conversation of fifteen minutes or more.”
- Any individual identified with this level of exposure is considered at higher risk and therefore, must self-quarantine.
- Individuals should monitor symptoms and follow-up with healthcare provider.
- Sick staff and/or students should not return until they have met the CDC’s [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- Other contacts will be reviewed based on this criteria and direction from the VDH.
- Appropriate leave will be provided to affected employees and excused absences for students.

#### **Scenario B: Staff or employee with in-home family member diagnosed with COVID-19**

- Staff or students exposed to someone with COVID-19 must self-quarantine for fourteen (14) days, in accordance with CDC and [VDH guidelines](#).
- Must determine whether there are other family members that attend or work in schools. Appropriate contact tracing must be completed using the same criteria as Scenario A.
- Appropriate leave will be provided to affected employees and excused absences for students.



### **Scenario C: Potential and/or suspected exposure to COVID-19**

- It is the responsibility of the staff member or parent (on behalf of the student) to notify the school principal of a COVID-19 diagnosis, pending diagnosis, and/or exposure.
- School administrators working in conjunction with School Health Services and Human Resources will review and investigate reports of potential COVID-19 cases and respond appropriately following current CDC and VDH guidelines.

### **Planning to Close Down**

Community-specific data, as reported by the [Virginia Department of Health](#), will continue to be monitored and reviewed daily by the division's COVID-19 Team. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school(s), the school division will work closely with the local health department to determine a course of action and appropriate notification. Any decision related to a reduction in in-person classes, a complete school closure, or a complete division closure will be based on guidance and direction from the Virginia Department of Health, and the [Pittsylvania County Health Department](#).